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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 002640

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SUBJECT: TURKEY CALLS ON IRAN TO STOP URANIUM ENRICHMENT

REF: A. ANKARA 2598

[1](#)B. ANKARA 2595

Classified By: DCM Nancy McEldowney, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: The MFA characterized Turkey's May 8 talks with visiting Iranian Supreme National Security Council Secretary Ali Larijani as direct. Larijani took a hard line

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on Iran's right to nuclear energy and Turkey responded that the onus is on Iran to overcome international suspicions and to identify a diplomatic solution, underscoring that Turkey will abide by a UNSC resolution on this issue. MFA Deputy Director General (DDG) for Arms Control and Disarmament Meric said Larijani presented the issue as a bilateral problem with the US and called the nuclear controversy a smoke screen for US plans for regime change. Larijani also highlighted Iran's partnership with Turkey against the PKK terrorist threat and suggested establishment of an Iranian, Iraqi and Turkish trilateral effort to combat the PKK. While Turkey is firmly in the international camp, some in the government share Iran's suspicions about US motives. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) In a May 10 briefing to foreign embassies, MFA DDG Bulent Meric and DDG for South Asia Affairs Babur Hizlan said that in separate meetings held at Iran's request with PM Erdogan, FM Gul and NSC Secretary-General Alpogan (FM and NSC meetings reported refuels), the Iranian nuclear negotiator took a hard line on Iran's right to a nuclear energy program, repeating the well-worn lines that Iran:

- advocates peaceful uses of nuclear energy to meet its growing energy needs (Larijani purportedly expressed uncertainty about the level of uranium enrichment already conducted in Iran but claimed that it would not go above the 5% allowed for R&D);
- has the right, on the basis of international agreements, to develop a nuclear energy program; and
- is determined "not to flinch" on this policy.

[1](#)3. (C) According to Meric, Larijani said Iran is waiting for the UNSC P-5 to respond to it's April 27 letter to the IAEA and "do its part" to resolve the crisis. Larijani insinuated that the issue at stake is much bigger than Iran's nuclear program, suggesting that the US desires a regime change in

Iran as part of the Broader Middle East and North Africa initiative. Meric said Larijani claimed the US is using the nuclear issue as a pretext to destabilize the region and discredit Iran in the eyes of the international community. He asked Turkey to help Iran change the direction of the international response to its nuclear program. Meric stated that Turkey pushed back, insisting that the issue is between Iran and the international community, not Iran and the US, and that Iran needs to find a diplomatic way out of the crisis.

14. (C) Meric said Larijani assured Turkey that Iran favors a diplomatic solution but also underscored that it is prepared for any eventuality. He indicated Iran's determination not to back down and reportedly said that if Iran is faced with a UN Chapter 7 resolution, it will cut off its cooperation with the IAEA. Hizlan said the Turkish Embassy in Tehran is reporting capital flight from the country and a growing concern about economic sanctions.

TURKEY TOES THE INTERNATIONAL LINE

15. (C) Meric and Hizlan described Turkey's response as direct and consistent with the international community position. We were told Turkey emphasized at each meeting: Iran's failure to convince the international community that its nuclear intentions are peaceful; the international community's suspicion that Iran is acting contrary to its non-proliferation treaty responsibilities; and Iran's lack of response to UN and IAEA recommendations to diffuse the situation. Meric said Turkey expressed dismay over President Ahmadinejad's April 11 statement about Iran's intention to join "the nuclear club" and urged the Iranian government to comply fully with the IAEA recommendations to suspend its

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uranium enrichment program and accept Russia's offer to produce nuclear power.

ANOTHER PKK TRILATERAL GROUP?

16. (C) Larijani also raised the PKK under the pretext of regional security, according to Meric. Furthering his anti-US propaganda, Larijani is reported to have said that the PKK is a tool of the US and that US military commanders have had discussions with senior PKK officials in Mosul and Kirkuk, Iraq within the past month. (Comment: Larijani said much the same to the press; we issued a denial. End Comment.) He noted Iranian extradition of PKK suspects to Turkey and offered to establish a trilateral (Iraq, Iran, Turkey) forum to combat the PKK. Meric said Turkey was non-committal on this concept, agreeing only to take it under advisement. When pressed, he said Turkey doesn't believe the time is right for such a trilateral effort since the Iraqi government is not yet fully formed.

WHERE TO GO FROM HERE?

17. (C) PM Erdogan and Iranian President Ahmadinejad, who just met on the margins of an Organization for Economic Cooperation conference in Baku, have agreed to meet again on the margins of a D-8 meeting on May 13 in Bali. In response to our question about the value of another meeting so soon, Meric responded that the UN Security Council could make a decision between now and then which might merit discussion.

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